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Art history through a queer lens

Focalization and semiotics applied to two Instagram accounts
dedicated to queer art history

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Abstract

This thesis examines how queer art history is created through the interaction between two Instagram accounts, the art they post, and their followers. This thesis has analysed how the semiotic meaning-making construct a representation of queerness and what the effects are of a queer focalization in a social media context. This research has analysed several posts and screenshots of the Instagram accounts which includes both image and text through a theoretical lens using concepts such as focalization, narrative semiotics, and semiosis, alongside terms like discourse and representation. The analysis was methodically inspired by Stuart Hall's distinction between discursive and semiotic approaches, and is divided into three parts. The first part applies semiotic terminology to analyse the material while the second part emulates Mieke Bal's application of focalization. The third part concludes with an example to show how semiotics, narratology, and discourses collaborates when creating and reading queer art history. In the conclusion two outcomes are found in how meaning-making processes on Instagram constructs queer representation. Firstly, it shows how queerness is created in the meeting between the artworks and the queer observer. Secondly, the results shows how the visual discourses on Instagram influences what signs are read as queer. In examining queer focalization the results concludes that in the relationship between images, the accounts posting them, and their followers, it is the accounts that have a profound advantage in steering the queer narrative. This poses a question whether or not it should be encouraged to shepherd queer readings or if this should be questioned and considered in relation to queer discourses.

Keywords: art history, queer, instagram, semiotics, semiosis, narratology, discourse, representation

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In recent years, queerness has not only been embodied by more people as an identity: it has found more respect and understanding. Queerness is however not only an identity, but it can be a way of life, an attitude, and it has a history. In art history, queerness has the potential to uproot and change how we look at art and how we theorize about it. In this thesis I will look at Instagram accounts which posts art pieces that are and/or become a part in queer art history. I have chosen to approach the subject with semiotic narratology and Mieke Bal's concept of focalization. Hence, the focus lies not in finding the queer artists of the past nor the embodied experience of the queer observer, but to look at the semiosis itself in this meeting. What is happening when a queer person sees a painting and identifies the person depicted as queer? What narrative is created? What is the effect of the queer reading? Who decides what queer art history is, and what are the consequences of their decision? Representation is not an unfamiliar term when it comes to modern media, but we must not forget that representation is present in every type of medium.

While the process itself lies in focus here the empirical material plays an important role and to be able to analyse queer readings I will look at two Instagram accounts, @arelesbianseverywhere who posts art pieces that they consider lesbian and @gayhistoryofart who posts art pieces they read as gay. Instagram as a platform provides a curatorial experience to anyone willing to take the part. While most art history accounts on Instagram don't have the same institutional renown and economic dependence as a museum, the act of curating carries with it the capability to influence. The aim hence becomes to dismantle the relationship between queer observers to the curated art on Instagram, and the people behind the accounts.

1.2 Purpose and research question

The intent of this thesis is to analyse how the relationship works between the observer, the art, and the account curating the art. By asking the following questions my intention is to expand the field of queer art history by examining the queer semiotic and discursive contexts created on Instagram. Hence, my research questions are the following:

- How does the semiotic meaning-making (semiosis) construct the representation of queerness?
- What does a queer focalization entail in a context of social media, and what are its effects?

While there is a universality to the questions, they will be put against my empirical material and considered thereafter.

1.3 Empirical material

The empirical material for this essay will consist of Instagram posts from @gayhistoryofart and @arelesbianseverywhere. In my work with the material I have chosen ten posts that will be the main focus of the semiotic analysis and when I address the focalization I will look at the accounts in whole. In addition to this I use captions and comments to further the analysis. The semiotic selection divides ten posts equally between the accounts @gayhistoryofart and @arelesbianseverywhere to provide an outlook of what images they post. On both accounts I scrolled to the bottom and decided to take every 25th post counting from the first post. The posts are randomly chosen to showcase that the selection is just a sample of the accounts and that the analysis could be done on any of the posts. The number of 25 was chosen to make sure both older and newer posts were included. In the analytical section which focuses on focalization I will make use of screenshots to showcase relative information that displays the functions of Instagram and the conditions for its users and how this informs the focalization.

1.4 Theory and method

I will be using Mieke Bal's account on the term focalization and how narratology can be used to look at semiotic interaction. Bal presents narratology as a reflection on meaning and its semiotic production, stating that narratology must be seen as a discursive model.¹ Focalization is a narratological term which is commonly understood as a point of view or narrative perspective. Bal however uses the term focalization to describe the relationship between an observer, the object they see, and the vision through which they see.² She states that she uses the term in this way because other definitions do not make a distinction between the vision presented and the voice who is presenting said vision.³ My usage of the term will

¹ Bal, M., *Looking in: the art of viewing*, G+B Arts International, Amsterdam, 2001, p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 42-46.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

look at the queer observer, the art, and the vision here will be represented by the Instagram accounts and their ‘owners’. In addition to this Mieke Bal’s and Norman Bryson’s “Art History and Semiotics” will be used to strengthen the link between narratology and semiotics.

Author of *Visible Signs*, David Crow, explains how semiosis was used by Charles Peirce to describe the act of signifying, the transferal of the meaning itself. This act is an active process between the observer and the sign, hence the meaning remains unfixed. The meaning is affected by who you are, your experiences, culture, and background.⁴ In this thesis semiosis is the point of interest, meaning it is the reading of the signs that are important. A distinction to make is that in my usage of the term I will not analyse the semiosis of the individual queer observer, but how the semiosis works based on theoretical viewpoints.

To fully bring together the semiotic, the discursive, and the narrative aspects in my analysis, Stuart Hall’s definition and understanding of representation will be utilized. Meaning gives us a sense of who we are, and we in turn give things meaning by the interpretation we provide, which means that nothing in itself has a single, fixed meaning. We also give meaning by how we represent something. Hall explains that representation can be the words we use about something, the images we produce, the associated emotions, our classifications, conceptualizations and values, and the stories we tell about it.⁵ Hall comments upon the differences of a semiotic and discursive approach. The semiotic approach touches more upon the ‘how’ of representation and how it produces meaning, while a discursive approach is more about the politics of representation: the effects and consequences, and power dynamics of knowledge that regulates identity and subjectivity.⁶ Hall explains how through his work Michel Foucault asserts that discourse is the production of knowledge through language, meaning language is created to represent knowledge of a particular subject.⁷ The aim of Foucault was to see, through this theory, how humans understood themselves in their culture, and how knowledge was produced in different periods.⁸ In this thesis discourse will be used

⁴ Crow, D., *Visible signs: an introduction to semiotics in the visual arts*, 3rd edn, Bloomsbury Visual Arts, London, 2018, p. 38.

⁵ Hall, S. ‘Introduction’ in Hall, S., ed., *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, Sage, London, 1997, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷ Hall, S. ‘Chapter 1’ in Hall, S., ed., *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, Sage, London, 1997, p. 44.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

as a way to analyse the production of knowledge created from the interaction between the art, the accounts, and their followers.

Methodically, the thesis' analytical section is organized by Hall's distinction between the semiotic and discursive approaches. The first section delves into the 'how' by using semiotic terminology while the second section approaches the accounts from the focalization. A third section is added to analyse an example of how the semiotics and the discourses of the focalization intertwine and creates the politics of queer representation. By separating the analysis in parts allows for a nuanced reading which then can produce a general picture of queer art history on Instagram.

My semiological method uses the semiotic terms in a more general way with inspiration from various directions. Most present will be Hall's understanding of Roland Barthes, and Mieke Bal's process of interpreting the Saussurean and Peircean models. Hall's reading of Barthes introduces the terms denotation and connotation. Denotation is the descriptive level where most people would agree on what meaning is read, while connotation is a more complex interpretation which involves a further societal contextualization.⁹ Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk introduces the influential Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce.¹⁰ They speak of Bal, meaning that her inventive approach takes on general principles of both.¹¹ What this means for this thesis is that I am making a deliberate choice in not following a particular school of semiology. Additionally, the semiotic analysis looks at both the visual and the textual semiosis.

My application of focalization emulates Mieke Bal's usage of the term, but furthers the potential malleability of the term by including social media as a vital element. Bal sees the focalization as a relationship. She describes that the subject and object of the focalization must be studied separately and together. The focalizer describes the way in which these elements are viewed.¹² In my analysis I follow her example by analysing each of the parts separately before making a collective examination.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 38 - 39.

¹⁰ Hatt, M. & Klonk, C., *Art History: A critical introduction to its methods*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2006, p. 200.

¹¹ Ibid, 214.

¹² Bal 2001, 47.

1.5 Previous research

In my section of previous research I have chosen to look at research which concerns how queerness can fit into the subject of art history and visual studies, and the role sexuality has in the subject. One example of such research is Sylvia Page's "'Make Visible the Otherwise': Queering the Art Library" (2018). Page remarks upon how both art and queerness are discursive concepts that are concerned with the politics of visibility. She uses the art library as a site for her questions concerning what it means to be seen and what it means to look, and how one looks for queerness.¹³ Art has an ability to exist outside and between our regulatory norms and can therefore, according to Page, provide intriguing answers to queries of queerness. She describes her article as a meeting ground of art, queer theory and information studies and explores these by looking at the collaboration between studio art students, the library and one art history professor.¹⁴ While this thesis looks at Instagram instead of a library I aim to examine the same questions regarding what it means to look for queerness and the effects of being seen.

"Extending the Dialogues of Diversity: Sexual Subjectivities and Education in the Visual Arts" (1995) by Kenn Gardner Honeychurch touches upon the lack of inclusion of sexuality in art education and its literature and his article aims to identify various explanations to why that is.¹⁵ Honeychurch discusses the stance of essentialists and social constructionists claims concerning sexual identity. He notes how the essentialists believes that sexuality is fundamental to each individual, and that homosexuality has existed across time and culture and therefore it is valid to investigate the sexuality of historical figures. Social constructionism is explained as viewing sexuality as a culturally dependent construction which therefore means contemporary definitions of sexuality cannot be applied to the past. This stance would therefore not consider gay history in art, but instead an art history which is written from the perspective of contemporary gay interest.¹⁶ Honeychurch points out that including sexual identity has epistemological effects for visual arts education and quotes Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick who means that sexuality is among the meaning-intensive of the human

¹³ Page, S., "'Make Visible the Otherwise': Queering the Art Library", *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* [online journal], vol. 37, no. 1, 2018, p. 20, <<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/697278>>, accessed 7 January 2021.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵ Gardner Honeychurch, K., 'Extending the Dialogues of Diversity: Sexual Subjectivities and Education in the Visual Arts', *Studies in Art Education* [online journal], vol.36, no. 4, 1995, p. 210, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1320935?seq=1>>, accessed 3 November 2020.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

qualities.¹⁷ He expresses how sexuality is irrevocably connected to the considerations of meaning in art, but that these meanings are constructed. Honeychurch further explains that while an artist's intention, subjectivity and historical conditions of production are all significant, the final implication of an artwork is constructed when consumed. The viewer becomes involved and is therefore part of the meaning-making of the art. The sexual identification is part of the viewer's subjectivity and is hence a factor in the construction of meaning.¹⁸ Considerably important in my text is the constructionist position which aims to see art history from a contemporary queer perspective and the importance of sexuality when constructing meaning.

Whitney Davis has made several contributions to art history in terms of Gay and Lesbian studies. One of them, "Founding the Closet: Sexuality and the Creation of Art History" (1992), touches upon the foundation of art history itself and its denial of same-sex sexuality. Davis remarks upon the fact that while art history as a subject has fought censorship from the outside, internal censorships have prevailed ever since the development of the study.¹⁹ He argues for the displacement of sexuality, particularly homosexuality, and the consequence of this leading to affecting the resources, theories, and methods of art history.²⁰ Davis points out how the lack of interest informs the way art historians collect, writes, and researches about the past²¹. This thesis takes an active stance in putting queer sexuality in the forefront and challenging heteronormativity in the subject.

My thesis aims to contribute to this field by including a social media platform as a prism for queer readings. The digitalisation of art history contributes to us sharing our readings and opens up a space for minorities and non-normative groups to contribute their art history. André Malraux speaks of a 'Museum without Walls' which refers to our access to innumerable works of art that no single museum could hold.²² First written in 1947, this book proves the continued progression of this idea. Today Instagram acts as a museum for us,

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 213,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁹ Davis, W., 'Founding the Closet: Sexuality and the Creation of Art History', *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* [online journal], vol. 11, no. 4, 1992, p. 171, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27948479>>, accessed 4 December 2020.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., p. 173.

²² Malraux, A., *The voices of silence*, Paladin, St Albans, 1974[1953], p. 16.

where our access to art can be compared to the democratizing effects of reproductions. This medialization does not only speak for queer art and readings, but art history as a subject.

1.6 Delimitations

Two Instagram accounts lays the ground for the methodological and theoretical work. The main focus will not be on comparing the two accounts, but rather to see what they together say about art history from a queer perspective. While the theory and the method of the essay touches upon semiotics, narratology, and discourse theory, these areas are delimited due to the focus on specific terms and viewpoints. Another delimitation is my choice of only having a small selection of posts and screenshots to look closer at. This thesis will neither touch upon individual queer experiences, nor at the historical accuracy of the information provided by the accounts. By applying contemporary queer interests to the subject of art history I delimit myself significantly. In the thesis when I refer to reading it will mean, unless stated otherwise, that what you see is chosen to be seen from a queer perspective. I am a genderqueer trans man, and I have a personal relationship to queer both in terms of sexuality and gender. My lived experience will not be central in the analysis, but will be used as a tool to look through. When I write about the queer observer I am including myself, and hence I must be aware of my own focalization in relation to the material.

1.7 Definitions

In my thesis I will use queer both referring to the category of identity and art as well as a verb. Sylvia Page uses this twofold definitions, and describes that as an identity queer connotates non-normative sexualities, which sometimes includes non-normative genders. As a verb, to 'queer' or to do something 'queerly' is to resist normativity and point out conventions which performs normativity. By extension, queer art can be seen as art that represents or engages with non-normative aspects of identities. Page clarifies that this definition of queer is not exhaustive.²³ My usage of queer will be used as an inclusive term that accounts for all non-normative identifications. Gay and lesbian will be used only when referring to the specific identity, while queer will be used whenever I speak of an experience or theoretic approach that includes anyone under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella. I acknowledge that queerness can not be strictly defined but that it has discourses attached to it. It is these discursive processes that I aim to make visible since they shape the queer art history.

²³ Page 2018, p. 21.

1.8 Disposition

To start my analysis I will first present the posts in two groups, one from each of the accounts. This presentation will be called the denotative descriptions²⁴ to distinguish it from the contextual analysis of the connotations. This leads to looking at the connotations, which includes a speculation of the semiosis in relation to the visual and textual signs. After this, the term focalization will be used to look at the relationship between the accounts, the artworks, and the followers. To bring the analysis together I will make use of an example to showcase how the semiotic and discursive analysis can be combined. In my conclusion I will have a final discussion of the theoretical findings of the analysis. Lastly, I will see if I have answered my research questions and look at potential future studies on the subject.

²⁴ An interesting question is whether a picture can truly be without connotations even while describing what we are seeing in the most straightforward way we can, but that discussion will have to subside.

2. Analysis

The aim of this section is to approach the empirical material with semiotic, narratologist, and discursive theories to collectively be able to understand how queer art history accounts operates on Instagram. The following part concerning denotations works to introduce images used by the accounts and is followed by analysing the connotations of these elements hence also processing their discourses.

2.1 Denotations and queer connotations

The first group of images includes Hippolyte Flandrin's *Study* (1836, see fig. 1), Carlo Saraceni's *Saint Sebastian* (1610 - 15, see fig. 2), Magnus Enckell's *Faun* (1914, see fig. 3), David Park's *The Beach* (1954, see fig. 4), and *Bust of Antinous* (ca. 2nd century, see fig. 5). Two features they all have in common is the fact they are all men and partially undressed, most just covering their privates. Four out of five works are portraying the men outside, and the exception is the bust of Antinous which is the only work where we get a glance of its physical location. All men share a similar body type of having a lean musculature and can by our contemporary perception be read as white. A concluding thought on the comparison of these denotations is that while they all differ from each other, there is not much that makes them stand out from one another, especially concerning their appearance.

The second group consists of Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith and her maidservant* (1613, see fig. 6), Johan Friedrich Overbeck's *Italia and Germania* (1815 - 28, see fig. 7), Henri Adrien Tanoux's *Nymphs in a forest* (1898, see fig. 8), Dario Villares Barbosa's *Mulheres* (1922, see fig. 9), and Rafael Pellicer Galeote's *Las universitarias* (1954, see fig. 10). In four of the images there are two women present. The exception is figure 8 which portrays nine women. Figure 8 alongside with figure 7 are the only ones situated outside, while figure 9 and 10 are indoors. In figure 6 the two women are enclosed in darkness which makes it hard to locate their position. As opposed to figure 1 - 5, only one painting contains nudity and here they are completely naked. Figure 9 is the only image where we can conclude it portrays two women of colour. The women each seem to have a bit more of a distinctive look compared to the men, but concerning body type and beauty, they are all in the same category.

Having looked at these posts and describing the denotation of them, we must now ask ourselves what the connotations are, and what they become when put forward as queer. How does the process of meaning transfer between the work of art and us as an observer? Crow in describing semiosis suggests how the meaning is affected by who you are, your experiences, culture and background.²⁵ If this sentiment holds, that would mean that the meaning-making itself is unstable. The queerness of an object depends on your reading, and in turn that means that the reader must find signs that signify queerness. As Bal and Bryson states, the point of the semiotic analysis is not to produce an interpretation but to examine how art is intelligible for the viewer, and the process which helps the viewer make sense of what they are seeing.²⁶ Barthes suggests that all images are polysemous, which implies that the observer ignores some readings and chooses to see others.²⁷ Due to the polysemy of each sign, there is no limit nor right or wrong to what signs are the ones to confirm queerness. There are however a few signs that are a recurring theme throughout the accounts history of posts. If we look at the ten posts we can divide the signification of queerness between the textual signs and the iconic signs.

If we start by looking at the textual signs, there are several aspects that help us read the queerness in the text. One of them are the names of the account, “gayhistoryofart” and “arelesbianseverywhere”. Both accounts use the caption to provide a few details of the artworks. @gayhistoryofart follows with their information with hashtags, some which repeats something from the description, such as #antinous #carlosaraceni, but also ones like #gayart #gayarthistory #queerart #queerhistory #homoeroticism.²⁸ @arelesbianseverywhere start their caption by always saying “Lesbians are in...” and end it with #arelesbianseverywhere. Furthermore, comments by other accounts become part of the verbal level. In figure 11 and figure 13 we have two examples of this. In figure 11, @marksos85 says “One of the biggest love stories of all time (clapping hand emoji). In figure 13, @morganandersonart tags another account and says “some good wlw²⁹ content”. Barthes introduces the term anchorage, and explains it as a technique developed to fix the polysemic stream of interpretations and meanings. Verbal text is used to focus the reading and guide the observer.³⁰ In our case, the

²⁵ Crow 2018, p. 38.

²⁶ Bryson, N. & Bal, M., ‘Semiotics and Art History’, *The Art Bulletin* [online journal], vol. 73, no. 2, 1991, p. 184, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3045790>> , accessed 22 October 2020.

²⁷ Barthes, R., *Image, music, text*, Fontana, London, 1977, p. 39.

²⁸ See fig. 11 & 12.

²⁹ Wlw stands for woman-loving woman

³⁰ Barthes 1977, pp. 40 - 41.

name of the account and the hashtags anchorage the observer to the queer reading. The comments by other accounts furthers this anchorage.

If we look closer at the images chosen by the account @gayhistoryofart, a notable theme is that of nudity. Most of the images portray one or more men naked or half-naked. If we look at nudity as a sign in combination with the verbal anchorage presented, it easily marks nudity as a sign of queerness. This is not a single occurrence but is following a historical trend of associating homosexuality as something purely sexual. Robert Nye, editor of *Sexuality, a reader on the history of ideas concerning sexuality*, relays that after the American Revolution the act of sodomy was increasingly seen as an offense against the natural order. By the end of the century a more medical language was adopted, which meant sodomy was more often seen as a disease rather than just as a spiritual failing.³¹ Another source of Nye's states how being satiated meant an increase in sexual appetite, which as a consequence meant that the person in question seeks out new forms of gratification. Briefly put, perversions happened when men could no longer find pleasure in having intercourse with women.³² Foucault accounts for the changeover from the act of sodomy to the identity of homosexuality. He observes how sodomy was a forbidden action and the practioner of this action was only a juridical subject. In the nineteenth century however, the homosexual was a personality type with a history, a character, and even an anatomy. Homosexuality was in their essence.³³ Our picture of homosexuality has changed, but historical ideas linger. In a subject such as art history where you look at art from now and backwards, I find the presence of such notions undeniable. If I compare this history to @gayhistoryofart, my argument must take note of the complexity of comparing contemporary and older ideas of sexuality and identity. Meanwhile, I see a need to elevate the argument that visual representation for queer men should not rely solely on nudity. To be openly sexual and naked is not the same as perversion, nor is it dangerous for individuals to identify with and emulate the men in the paintings. A question must be raised in the queer community: how can we find images and paintings that represent the full spectrum of queerness?

In retrospect, @arelesbianseverywhere does not have the same focus on nudity. Instead I find another pattern present: that of duality, a twosomeness. Historical ideas of women's romantic

³¹ Nye, R., ed., *Sexuality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 109.

³² Ibid., p. 153.

³³ Foucault, M., *Sexualitetens historia Bd 1 Viljan att veta*, new edn., Daidalos, Göteborg, 2002, p. 64.

and sexual relationships with each other are portrayed and talked about in a manner quite different from homosexual men. The sexuality of women, queer or not, has in the recent centuries been repressed and not spoken of. One proof of this can be found in the criminal records of sodomy and homosexuality; if you compare men with women who were caught and arrested, the statistics shows that men are the large majority here. Women were rarely gravely punished due to the ‘female sodomy’ being overlooked.³⁴ Another example showcased by Nye is the view on prostitutes. Nye remarks upon the fact that prostitution especially during the nineteenth century was seen not only as moral depravity but also as a sort of medicalized degeneration.³⁵ Another of Nye’s references considers the letter-writing between women in the nineteenth century and raises a question of whether their love for each other was platonic or not. They reason that today, our reading of their letters conveys sensuality and erotic feelings. The letters speak of bittersweet kisses, nights spent in one another’s arms, passionate embraces, and longing. It is clear that if these women had written this to a man, we would consider them in our terms heterosexual.³⁶ What I can surmise is that queer women have not been nor are validated even when two women explicitly state their sexual or romantic attraction to each other. @arelesbianseverywhere, perhaps without the intention, makes a solid point of choosing images of two or more women together. But as a counterargument, how does the representation for single queer women look like? What would we think of an account that like @gayarthistory posted images only of a naked woman, often alone? What discourse lies behind the twosomeness of love between women, and what effects does this have on the contemporary queer community?

2.2 Queer focalization

Moving on to the narrative aspect of semiotics, Bal and Bryson further explains how narrative semiotics “provides a possibility of reading images against the grain of the alleged opposition between discourse and image by interpreting elements as signs of negation”.³⁷ It does not only identify the subject within the image, but it also specifies the nature and effectiveness of each subject’s agency. Bal and Bryson further states that one must remember that narrative is not a one-sided structure. A highly relevant aspect is the way in which a

³⁴ Roelens, J., ‘Visible Women: Female Sodomy in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Southern Netherlands (1400 - 1550)’, *BMGN: Low Countries Historical Review* [online journal], vol. 130, no. 3, 2015, p. 9, <<https://doi.org/10.18352/bmgn-lchr.10101>>, accessed 6 January 2021.

³⁵ Nye 1999, p. 128.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

³⁷ Bryson & Bal 1991, p. 206.

viewer is invited to participate in the representation³⁸. They declare how accounts on the narrative in visual art tends to focus on how images are able to narrate stories. This, however, puts narrating as a matter of discourse, and not as something visual. This can be amended by approaching the narrative in images with a semiotic perspective.³⁹ Bal and Bryson does this by organizing the informative sources into three narrative agents: the narrator (the source of the utterance), the focalizer (the vision presented in the utterance) and the actor (who acts out the sequence of events that are presented). The narrator holds discursive power and can embed the others' vision into a text, or in this case, an image.⁴⁰

Mieke Bal declares how narrative should be seen as a discursive mode which affects all semiotic objects to varying degrees. In a semiotic interaction, it determines the production of meaning.⁴¹ The term focalization is relevant due to its inclusion of not only the object, but the observer and the means through which the object is presented. To be able to understand the full discursive production we need to look at the narrative which is produced from the three “sections”. The focalized object here is the images posted to both accounts. These posts can be analysed individually, but I define the narrative of the accounts as all the images brought together. The observer can be anyone with access to the internet, but to simplify we will use the followers of the account as our observer. We can make an assumption that those who follow these accounts are people who agree to the narrative presented or are curious about what gay and lesbian art history looks like. The focalizer is the account itself, or rather the poster behind the account. I will use the term account to emphasize the fact that very little is known about the person/s behind the accounts.

2.2.1 The image/the object

In the triad of the object, the observer and the focalizer, the object possesses the most complicated role. Its presence is needed for the analysis to exist, but why and how are often dismissed in favour of looking at the discursive choices of the people involved. But in queer art history, the representation itself of queerness is a vital point for our visibility in society. It is hard to give credit to this saying but many queer people says that “queer people has always existed, no matter the time and place”. This means something different to every queer person, but it can summerized as meaning that there has always been cultures and societies in which

³⁸ Ibid., p. 206.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 202.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 204.

⁴¹ Bal 2001, p. 41.

some people move beyond *our* understanding of a binary gender system. The question then becomes, what criteria is applied to the selection of images on the Instagram accounts? And once the choice is made, what information is provided to the followers? What I can surmise from examining the posts, @gayhistoryofart provides the title, the artist and an approximate year, while @arelesbianseverywhere does the same as well as adding a location, a city and a country. What we do not get is access to the motivation behind the choice and the story of the artwork. The one criteria we can count on is that the image must relate to or be positioned within queerness. The textual signs implies the queerness within the image, but what that entails is not spoken of. Does the image belong to queer art history because the artist is queer, or is it the artwork, the motive, that is queer? If we approach queerness from a post-structuralist approach, or Honeychurch's account on constructionism, we cannot apply modern definitions of sexuality in the past.⁴² Yet, it matters that we do not assume that we cannot speak of or see the queerness in history. The approach to choosing queer images can therefore be motivated by suspicion, likeliness, confirmation, feelings, or it can be completely irrelevant. And this applies both if the artwork is chosen based on the artist or the image. It is difficult however to completely understand the motivation of choice for the Instagram accounts. @arelesbianseverywhere, as seen in Figure 14, poses a question in their profile: Are lesbians everywhere? They answer with a yes, and "Exploring representations over the art world". @gayhistoryofart simply says "Art history through a gay lens".⁴³ Their profiles give us an inkling of their approach, but do not give us enough information to understand why which artworks are chosen.

Another way of understanding the selection of artworks is to look at what they say together as a collection. The current layout of Instagram allows one to look at the images as if browsing the catalogue of a museum. We get access to a wall of artworks, and the quantity itself, what they make together, provides further semiotic and discursive meanings. Instagram is not quite established as a museum, and this affects the artworks. Neither accounts include the frame of the artwork. Instead, a frame is created from the space between each individual post (See fig. 16 & 17). In spirit of André Malraux one could view this as a frame that frames the mass of images into an imaginary queer museum.

⁴² Gardner Honeychurch 1995, p. 212.

⁴³ See fig. 15.

2.2.2 The follower/the observer

The role of the observer holds a twofold role; they are influenced by the artworks they view yet they take active decisions in their own interaction with it. This interaction is shaped not only by the art and the vision it is presented from, but also by the who the observer is. The post-structuralist stand establishes the creation of meaning in the meeting between the observer and the focalized object. Hence, it is vital we analyse the role of the followers of the Instagram accounts. Their existence in itself confirms a certain legitimacy to the accounts, and affects the credibility to the message they present. When looking at the followers, there are several categories which can be relevant to look at. Age, religion, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, and so on. Most of these however can not be known unless we look at each individual person, and depending on their account not even then. Based on the queer theme of the accounts, we can deduce that the followers are divided into two groups: the queer follower and the nonqueer follower. This is a logical conclusion when looking at the accounts, making this not a methodological deduction but one of theory. This deduction is possible because the accounts are explicitly stating their queerness in the name of the account and in their profile.

The queer follower in this case includes anyone who identifies with having a non-normative sexuality and/or gender identity, or simply identifies with the queerness. Their motivation for following the account/s can of course stem from many various reasons, but I can categorize three different general directions in which to sort the queer followers into. First, the people might not have a particular interest in art history, but is attracted by the queer aspect presented. They put emphasis on the queer in queer art history. Second, some are likely to have an interest in queer art history specifically and follows the account/s to incorporate this into their social media. The third category is those who have an interest in art history and follow the account/s to make sure their knowledge and appreciation covers a range of variability across the field. The distinction between the second and third categories lies in the fact that not all queer people have a particular interest in queer history and queer subjects. The nonqueer follower is defined as anyone who does not fit in with the description provided in the previous paragraph. It is a deliberate choice to name them as nonqueer, not because there is any judgement attached, but to not simply call them 'the follower', hence implying they are the status quo. The nonqueer follower can be similarly categorized as the queer follower was. To clarify, those categories are: 1. Not particularly interested in art history but

the queer aspect attracts them. 2. Those with an interest in queer art history, with an emphasis on the queer aspect. 3. People with an interest in art history, and makes a choice to include queerness. It is not possible to see the statistics of the followers of the accounts, but each category, six in total, has different implications on the discourse of queer art history.

While the observers of the artworks have their own individual experience, the art itself has a certain influence on whoever is looking at it. The images have something to say, and while they are a digital reproduction and indeed chosen by someone, their signs have meaning. On the other side of the meeting is the observer themselves, and their interaction with the artworks. Instagram provides a concrete way of documenting this interaction. The most common and well-used ways of interacting is the 'like' button. By clicking the heart, or double-tapping on the picture itself, the heart goes from being an outline to a fully coloured red (See fig. 18 for reference). It has a purpose which has semiotic meanings for the users of Instagram, and even if you would be unfamiliar with the platform, the semiotic meaning of a heart is familiar to most. Apart from the like button, you have several functions which both shapes the interaction with the post and the account itself. You can report a post, share it, copy the link to it, and post a comment on it, which will appear beside or beneath it (See figure 19). As for the account you can block them, unfollow, or send them a private message (See figure 20). What can be understood from this is that the individual follower has a selection of choices in how they want to interact. It is however arguable that for the interactions to have consequential effects it needs to be done with a large number of followers. The power in the numbers affects the algorithm that Instagram uses, meaning that the more interaction an account gets the more it will be recommended to people who do not follow it.

2.2.3 The account/the focalizer

Behind the accounts, there is one or more people who curate the art that is shown. Instagram does not force or require anyone to be personal, or to share who they are. Yet, what images they post, and what captions they write, matter. As Bal mentions, a point of view is chosen and presented from that vision.⁴⁴ In this case, queerness is such a vision that the artworks are presented from. In this medium, it can be hard to separate the account from the artworks themselves and from the person/s behind the account. Bal suggests to look at the combination of the focalizer and the focalized object since it affects the observer's perception of the object.

⁴⁴ Bal 2001, p. 42.

She also points out that the image a focalizer presents says something about the focalizer themselves.⁴⁵ In this case, where little to no information is given about the focalizer, we must look to the account itself. First, however, I want to reflect on the identity of the focalizers. This speculation is not a confirmation of the importance of knowing someone's identity, but as a way to understand the relationship between the focalizer, the observer and the artworks. One category of identity which shapes the content significantly is race, ethnicity and geographical location. By just looking at the feed, we get an idea, unconsciously or not, about this. @arelesbianseverywhere states that they are a white woman in the caption of one of their posts. @gayhistoryofart makes no such statements. Looking at the art they are posting however one gets the impression that they are white. There is no confirmation of this, but either way the absence of people of colour speaks volumes about queer history and art. If @gayhistoryofart bases their selection of artworks on criteria which demands some sort of confirmation of queerness, we have to acknowledge our historical injustice to artists of colour. If the choice is mostly one of personal opinion, it is a clear consequence of queer culture's erasing and dismissal of queer people of colour. Both points towards a need for us examine representation, both in contemporary media and in historical ways, and the lack of it.

A relevant question becomes: how do they make the decision? In the previous paragraph I reflected on the lack of diversity on @gayhistoryofart. It is well established that the images we see matter, but it is equally as important to understand why we see them, and to look at the process behind the choices. One possibility would be to question the owners of the accounts about their intentions, motivations and process of selection, but I approach this as an observer. The information available to the followers is the information that is available for me. In 2.2.1 I speculated about what qualifies an image as queer: must it be confirmed, suspected etcetera. Furthermore, the question becomes from what point of view the account takes on in their selection. Are they biased? Is it an educated decision? A matter of taste? Or perhaps a Google search? It matters because naming your account to encompass queer history has discursive repercussions. Particularly because you have a certain influence when you are the owner of an account. What to post, what to delete, which comments you answer and which ones you delete. It is more than just curating the art, you also have the influence and access to oversee the conversation around queer art.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 50.

2.3 Queer meanings

Hall suggests that we also give meaning to things by how we represent them. This representation can be produced in the words we use, in the images, the stories we tell, and in the ways in which we conceptualize something.⁴⁶ Representation is not only about what is portrayed, but what connection it creates to the people identifying with what they are seeing. Both semiotics and narratology touch upon the visual and its semiosis, but do not describe the culture that is built from the signs and the narratives produced. To exemplify how focalization and semiotic discourses operate together I will make use of an example to showcase how the followers can communicate and influence the account, and therefore the art which is chosen. I will look at a post from @arelesbianseverywhere which depicts John Collier's Pharaoh's Handmaidens (See appendix, figure 21) and the interaction which took place there. The example shows the unstable discursive position of the queer community. The owner of the account states that as a result of the debate in the comments section, they see it necessary to apologize, as well as to contextualize why they chose to post the painting, hence editing the caption of the post to:

(...) The desire to post this painting was in line with the rest of the works you can find on this account: rewriting art history from a lesbian perspective, subverting it, in some way, and being able to declare in that if lesbians supposedly have never existed in art (according to History), we can equally say that we have existed everywhere, this is, in every representation I can see them. The aim of this account is and will always be political and plays with the idea of resignification, but after reading you I understand that this is not always possible as a white woman: as you said, indigenous women deserve to choose their own representations, free from fetishism and stereotypes, and not as in Orientalism, a movement in which this work is framed. (...)⁴⁷

Their answer is a response to the multitude of comments that states a wish for the account to delete the post. I have chosen three comments which represents the sentiment throughout the comments:

⁴⁶ Hall 1997, p. 3.

⁴⁷ @arelesbianseverywhere, 'Lesbians are in John Collier's 'Pharaoh's Handmaidens', 1883...', Instagram, 24 October 2020, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGuINBpjEC5/>>, accessed 7 January 2021.

This is literally orientalist fetishisation of women of colour to the t we're not gonna recontextualise these paintings that were there for the gaze of colonisers who raped and murdered my people.⁴⁸

this is a certified white post, whites don't get to somehow "recontextualize" orientalism into "good representation".⁴⁹

Why would you delete comments from indigenous people / women of colour ? Please use your brain and don't silent us. Lesbians deserve representation, it matters and I would never ever question that. Nevertheless orientalism is plain sh*t and dehumanise our people. Giving fetishisation a platform won't help any of us in any kind - or at least if it helps you, be my guest, but let us out of it.⁵⁰

The comments reflects how queer culture can have certain presumptions that actually are harmful, but it also shows a disagreement about how queer culture can use its position to disort and overpower history and harmful practices of the past. The followers take a stand away from the account's decision of artwork. In their apology, they explain how they reason when choosing art and that their conviction is to declare that "if lesbians supposedly have never existed in art (according to History), we can equally say that we have existed everywhere".⁵¹ This expresses how it is possible to choose to see queerness, an active choice which creates meanings and transform history. The question that must be raised then is for whom does it transform? Does it benefit all queer people? How can we account for our differences and the differences in our ancestors' history? The comments mention recontextualization and raises a question of who has the prerogative in questions of representation. If representation as Hall suggested is how we give meaning to something, we must also ask ourselves who is the representer.

⁴⁸ @jiixbooks, 'This is literally orientalist fetishisation of women of colour...', Instagram, 25 October 2020, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGuINBpjEC5/>>, accessed 7 January 2021.

⁴⁹ @andymori, 'this is a certified white post, whites don't get to...', Instagram, 25 October 2020, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGuINBpjEC5/>>, accessed 7 January 2021.

⁵⁰ @themagicianstribе, 'Why would you delete comments from indigenous people...', Instagram, 25 October 2020, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGuINBpjEC5/>>, accessed 7 January 2021.

⁵¹ @arelesbianseverywhere, 'Lesbians are in John Collier's 'Pharaoh's Handmaidens', 1883...', Instagram, 24 October 2020, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGuINBpjEC5/>>, accessed 7 January 2021.

3. Final discussion

In this thesis I have analysed two art history accounts on Instagram and their queerness from several theoretical terms and viewpoints. These include denotations, connotations, narrative semiotics, discourse theory, focalization, representation, and meaning. The analytical potential of these terms has been considered in relation to the empirical material. In applying the terms to queerness the analysis has both been developed further and highlighted the potential of interdisciplinarity. The malleable quality of queerness has here been utilized to approach the material from an art historical perspective and proved the potential of ‘queering’ the traditional theoretical areas of the subject.

When considering the first research question ‘How does the semiotic meaning-making (semiosis) construct the representation of queerness?’, I found two outcomes in my analysis. In the first outcome I found a potential in how queerness can be created and produced in the interaction itself between art and queer people. The second one found that certain discourses are created around queerness which informs what signs are most often read as queer. Starting off with the potential of meaning-making, we can understand the visual aspect of sexuality by identifying signs. By making these signs visible, we can use them to express identity and sexuality in ways that liberate us from hegemonic norms. One example of this is how drag queens and drag kings use exaggerated features of gender to be read a certain way. If someone were to ask another person if they are a woman or a man, then it might be so that this person has different signs that both are associated with masculinity and femininity. Queer people use these signs both to consciously disturb ruling norms and to express themselves. In the meeting of art, queer people can make use of these signs, their own semiosis, to make queer readings and finding new representation of queerness in the past. Representation can be found by applying contemporary ideas to older images, and by taking on a constructionist stance it is possible to do so without infringing on identification categories of the past. A danger of this however, which relates to the second conclusion, is that repetitive usage of certain signs leads to a discourse forming. It might be inevitable, but what the discourse becomes leaves a great impact on how queerness is both perceived and expressed. As demonstrated in section 2.1.2 there are several historical aspects which have informed the discourses we have today about queer people. In applying these to artworks, they are reproduced while being seen as a representation of queerness. By looking at @gayarthistory for example, it is not that nudity is something negative, but rather that the image of queerness

as something strictly sexual is enforced. Hence the subject of diversity must be applied to ensure that queerness is not only represented, but is so in a way that accurately pictures the reality and the enormous variety of queerness. Finding the queer variety in art history raises questions concerning the historiography of the subject overall. Who tells the story, and who is included? Who is not, and why? How do we handle the unfortunate inheritance of (and still prevailing) sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia etcetera? Queer approaches to art history has a lot of potential to uproot harmful constructs, but it is not free from faults by any means and equally as dangerous discourses forming. In using semiotics to look at queerness it is possible to both see these patterns but also to transform meanings and use the signs to express yourself. The example in 2.3 showcases the intricate way in which semiosis, representation, and discourses connects and creates the meaning-making of queerness. As mentioned in section 1.7, queer is both a category of identity and a verb, and in relation to the research question, queer readings of art embody both definitions.

The second research question is ‘What does a queer focalization entail in a context of social media, and what are its effects?’. In applying the narratological term focalization and considering it with a queer and semiotic perspective to the empirical material, a clearer picture of each of the parts involved has been produced. The triad of focalization includes the object, the observer, and the focalizer. In addition to each role being analysed, their relation to each other has been examined in order to consider the effect the relationship has on queer art history. The role of Instagram and its impact has been contemplated both in relation to focalization and how it affects queerness, seeing both the potential and the consequences of social media. In my analysis, the object in question is the images chosen by the accounts which are then viewed by the follower. What this means is that the choice of images itself presents a certain narrative of queerness which will inform the reading. The textual signs indicate queerness but otherwise it is not clear what the intention of the accounts are with their choice of image. Two different approaches to this can be taken. One way to handle this is by not only accepting the choices but to appraise the attitude of individual readings that uplifts queerness. In section 2.3 this method is adopted by @arelesbianseverywhere when they explain that they choose to see lesbians everywhere. Another way would be to question the discursive effects this can have in the queer community. For example, if we look at @gayarthistory, there is a clear lack of people of colour represented in the images. With the account not expressing awareness of this nor stating its intention, it contributes to a warped image of queerness as something ‘white’. The two different approaches to this question are

not polarized, but become complicated when applied to social media. The technological aspect of the images being reproduced is further complicated by how the followers of the account can and cannot interact with the image. The example in 2.3 further this statement by showing how certain followers are displeased by the choice of the image and the implications of this. Their comments do not affect the choice of the account to keep the post up. While they can unfollow the account the image will still continue to exist. To conclude, the results of the analysis showcases how the roles of the art, the follower and the accounts all affect each other. Social media is one of the ways in which art history continues to be produced and reproduced, and must therefore be considered. There will always exist narratives created by art, and narratives of art created by us, and queerness has the potential to question, challenge, uproot and change how we narrate art history and therefore we need to examine it in turn. This thesis concludes that the narrative mainly created here is an anachronistic one, the images are emptied of their context and becomes a surface for identification.

Further studies might with interest approach a similar empirical material or theoretical perspective. A possible approach would be to compare how queer art history created from social media fits into the Western canon of art typically used in traditional art history education. Another angle would be to delve further into a postcolonial analysis of queer art history and how social media can make visible the discourses surrounding white queerness in art history. The nature of queerness provides infinite possibilities to explore how we perceive and create art history, and the beauty of it is that we are only at the very start of exploring this.

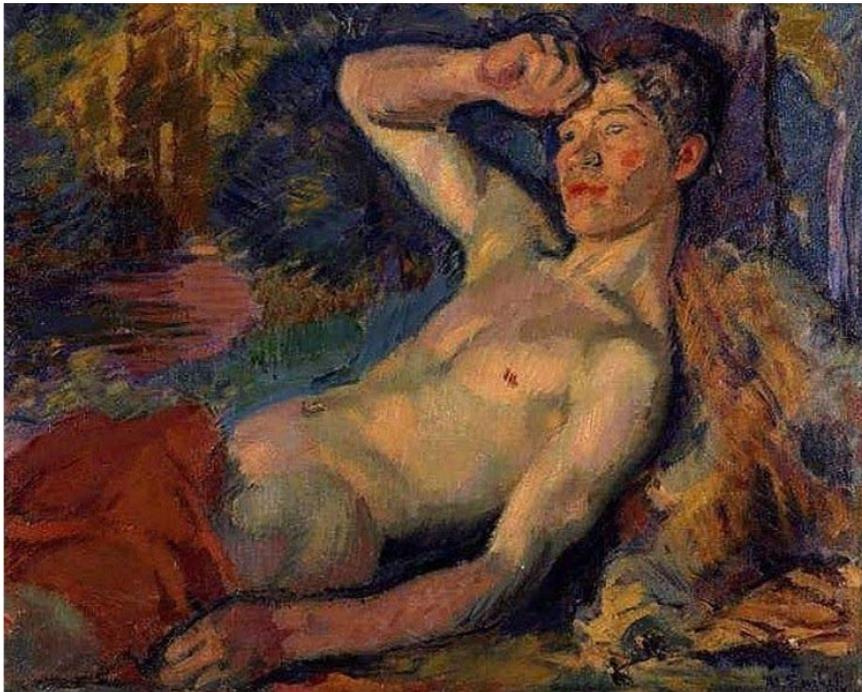
4. Appendix



Figure 1: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2017-09-07, depicting Hippolyte Flandrin's *Study (Young Male Nude Seated Beside the Sea)*, 1836.



Figure 2: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2017-10-20, depicting Carlo Saraceni's *Saint Sebastian*, 1610 - 1615.



gayhistoryofart • Following ...

gayhistoryofart Faun. Magnus Enckell, 1914.
#gayart #gay #gayhistory
#gayarthistory #lgbt #lgbtart
#queerhistory #queerart #queer
#magnusenckell #enckell #symbolism
#finnishart #finnishartist #gaypainting
#homoeroticism

152w



190 likes

DECEMBER 4, 2017

Add a comment...

Post

Figure 3: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2017-12-04, depicting Magnus Enckell's *Faun*, 1914.



gayhistoryofart • Following ...

gayhistoryofart The Beach. David Park, 1954.
#davidpark #davidparkartist
#bayareafigurativemovement #gayart
#gayarthistory

138w



136 likes

MARCH 9, 2018

Add a comment...

Post

Figure 4: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2018-03-09, depicting David Park's *The Beach*, 1954.



gayhistoryofart • Following
Государственный Эрмитаж / Hermitage Mus...

gayhistoryofart Bust of Antinous. ca. 2nd century CE.
#antinous #greekart #antiquity #romanart #sculpture #hadrian #gayart #gayarthistory

96w

marksos85 One of the biggest love stories of all time 🍌

7w Reply

229 likes
JANUARY 3, 2019

Add a comment... Post

Figure 5: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2019-01-03, depicting *Bust of Antinous*, ca. 2nd century CE.



arelesbianseverywhere • Following ...

arelesbianseverywhere Lesbians (and feminist revenge) are in Artemisia Gentileschi's: 'Judith and her Maidservant' (1613), Florence; 'Judith Beheading Holofernes' (1612), Napoli; 'Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting' (1930), Windsor. . 🍌 November 25th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

#arelesbianseverywhere #lesbiansareeverywhere #lesbianseverywhere

101w

elyssssium YES

66 likes
NOVEMBER 25, 2018

Add a comment... Post

Figure 6: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2018-11-25, depicting Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith and her Maidservant*, 1613.



Figure 7: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-03-02, depicting Johan Friedrich Overbeck's *Italia and Germania*, 1815 - 28.



Figure 8: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-06-11, depicting Henri Adrien Tanoux's *Nymphs in a Forest*, 1898.



Figure 9: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-08-23, depicting Dario Villares Barbosa, *Mulheres*, 1922.

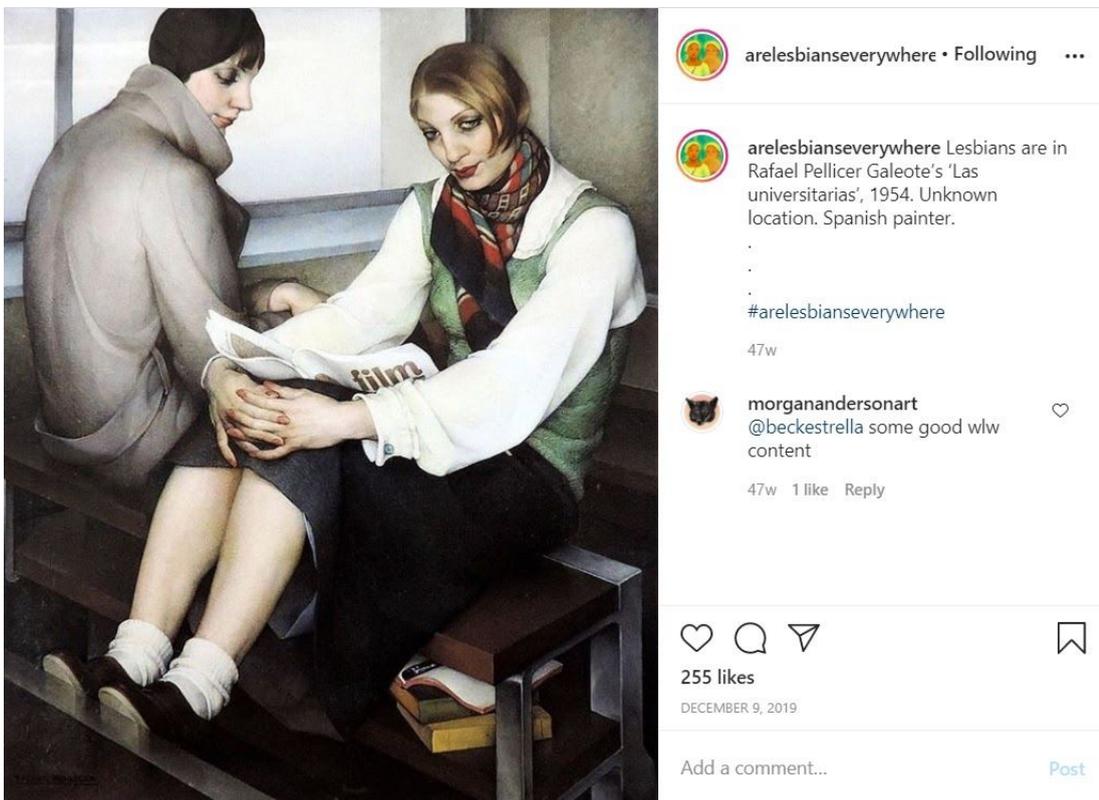


Figure 10: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-12-09, depicting Rafael Pellicer Galeote's *Las universitarias*, 1954.



Figure 11: Caption and comments section of a post from 2019-01-03.



Figure 12: Caption and comments section of a post from 2017-10-20.

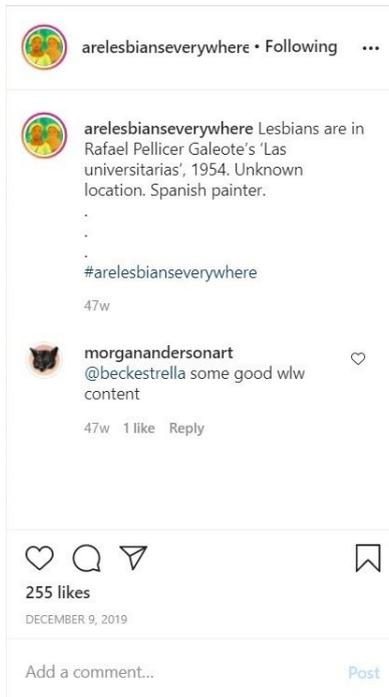


Figure 13: Caption and comments section of a post from 2019-12-09.



Figure 14: Instagram header of the profile of @arelesbianseverywhere.



Figure 15: Instagram header of the profile of @gayhistoryofart.



Figure 16: A selection of posts from @gayhistoryofart on the web version of Instagram.

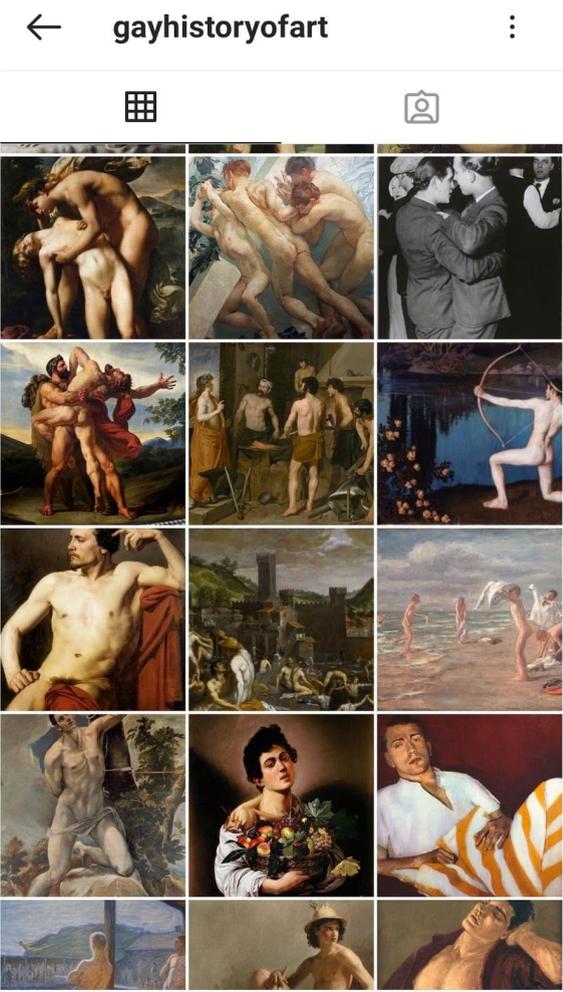


Figure 17: A selection of posts from @gayhistoryofart on the app Instagram.



Figure 18: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2020-08-18, depicting Lois Mailou Jones' *The Lovers*, 1950.

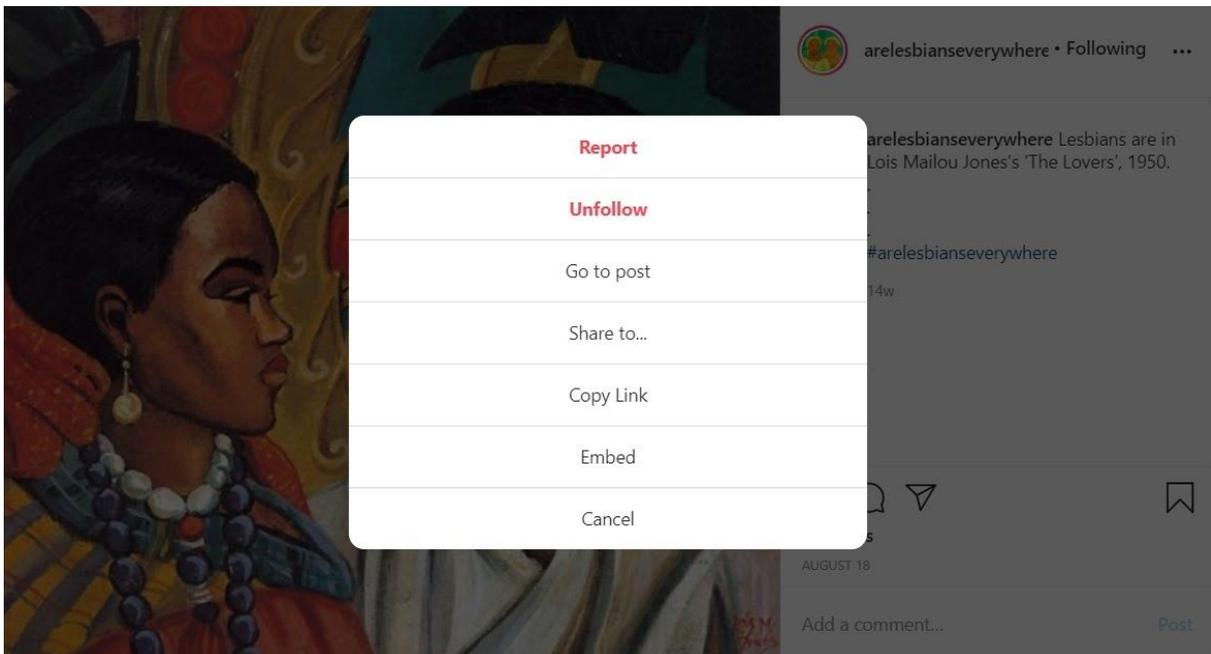


Figure 19: Menu of choices for the followers concerning individual images.

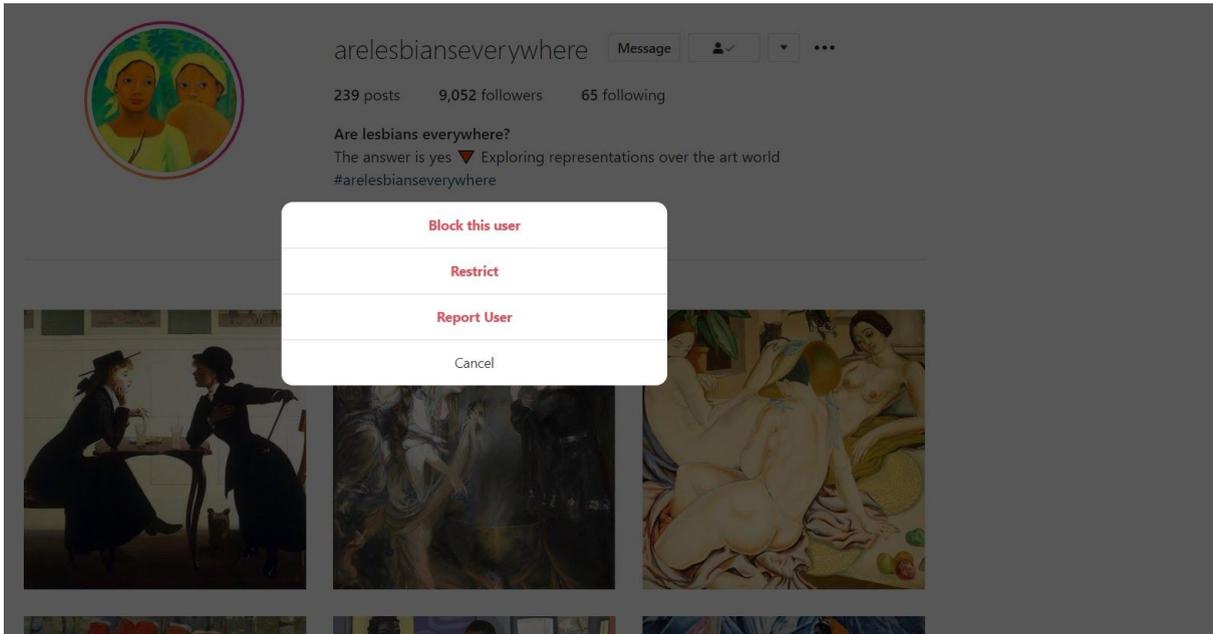


Figure 20: Menu of choices for the followers concerning the account.

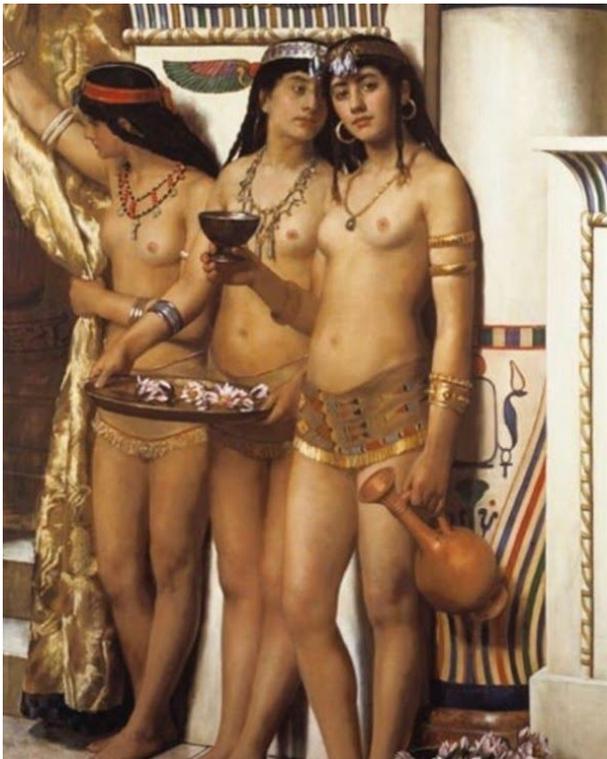


Figure 21: Cropped image from an Instagram post by @arelesbianseverywhere, 2020-10-24, depicting John Collier's *Pharaoh's Handmaidens*, 1883.

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6. List of figures

Figure 1: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2017-09-07, depicting Hippolyte Flandrin's *Study (Young Male Nude Seated Beside the Sea)*, 1836, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/BYuYAXdH08U/>>, accessed 6 November 2020.

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Figure 4: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2018-03-09, depicting David Park's *The Beach*, 1954, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/BgG6ZkmHLBR/>>, accessed 6 November 2020.

Figure 5: Instagram post from @gayhistoryofart, 2019-01-03, depicting *Bust of Antinous*, ca. 2nd century CE, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BsKL7u_nPaR/>, accessed 6 November 2020.

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Figure 7: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-03-02, depicting Johan Friedrich Overbeck's *Italia and Germania*, 1815 - 28, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BuhOmanhgQ_/>, accessed 6 November 2020.

Figure 8: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-06-11, depicting Henri Adrien Tanoux's *Nymphs in a Forest*, 1898, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/BylOy0CiMnr/>>, accessed 6 November 2020.

Figure 9: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-08-23, depicting Dario Villares Barbosa, *Mulheres*, 1922, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/B1f867mDe8m/>>, accessed 6 November 2020.

Figure 10: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2019-12-09, depicting Rafael Pellicer Galeote's *Las universitarias*, 1954, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/B53iqcMo2P8/>>, accessed 6 November 2020.

Figure 11: Caption and comments section of a post from 2019-01-03, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BsKL7u_nPaR/>, accessed 6 November 2020,

Figure 12: Caption and comments section of a post from 2017-10-20, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bae4p8vn3pf/>>, accessed 6 November 2020.

Figure 13: Caption and comments section of a post from 2019-12-09, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/B53iqcMo2P8/>>, accessed 6 November 2020.

Figure 14: Instagram header of the profile of @arelesbianseverywhere, <<https://www.instagram.com/arelesbianseverywhere/>>, accessed 23 November 2020.

Figure 15: Instagram header of the profile of @gayhistoryofart, <<https://www.instagram.com/gayhistoryofart/>>, accessed 23 November 2020.

Figure 16: A selection of posts from @gayhistoryofart on the web version of Instagram, <<https://www.instagram.com/gayhistoryofart/>>, accessed 24 November 2020.

Figure 17: A selection of posts from @gayhistoryofart on the app Instagram, <<https://www.instagram.com/gayhistoryofart/>>, accessed 24 November 2020.

Figure 18: Instagram post from @arelesbianseverywhere, 2020-08-18, depicting Lois Mailou Jones' *The Lovers*, 1950, <<https://www.instagram.com/p/CEBZKg0oCry/>>, accessed 27 November 2020.

Figure 19: Menu of choices for the followers concerning individual images,
<<https://www.instagram.com/p/CEBZKg0oCry/>>, accessed 27 November 2020.

Figure 20: Menu of choices for the followers concerning the account,
<https://www.instagram.com/arelesbianseverywhere/>>, accessed 27 November 2020.

Figure 21: Cropped image from an Instagram post by @arelesbianseverywhere, 2020-10-24,
depicting John Collier's *Pharaoh's Handmaidens*, 1883,
<<https://www.instagram.com/p/CGuINBpjEC5/>>, accessed 27 November 2020.